

March 5, 2021

Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Ave
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you all for being here today and taking the time to hear the voices of the People of Connecticut. My name is Holly Sullivan and I am the President of the Connecticut Citizens Defense League.

I would like to express my sincere desire that this committee move forward HB 6491. As a single mother, I am extremely cognizant of my responsibility to protect not only myself but my seven year old daughter. I work full time which leaves me juggling errands in the evenings. I am often assisting my daughter get buckled in her booster seat in the parking lot of the grocery store or gas station after dark. Having been raised with firearms, I made the decision years ago to be trained and carry a firearm responsibly. However, I have had conversations with many women who express to me that they do not wish to have the responsibility of a firearm. I understand and respect this. However, these same women have often expressed frustration that they have few tools available to them as an alternative. In our state, women can secure a permit which grants them the means to take lethal force if needed. However, women in this state have no avenue to protect themselves with non-lethal force outside of the home. Further, there are many instances in which a woman like myself may not have the ability to carry a firearm due to the circumstances of the day. I work within 10 minutes of the New York State border. If I need to run an errand or do business over the state line, my firearm absolutely cannot accompany me. Most women in this country have the means to protect themselves with non-lethal electronic devices- including states like New York, California and New Jersey. I hope this committee will support a truly common sense proposal for the safety of women in our state.

I am also here today to strongly urge you to reject HB 6355. This passage of this bill will undoubtedly have severe implications for the genuinely good people of this state. As written, this bill allows for absolute circumvention of due process. I am sure we will hear much discussion of due process in the hearing. However, I want to urge you to deeply consider the impact this bill will have on mental health in our state. I have, on several occasions, spoken with women gun owners who were afraid to get basic counseling for very common issues like post partum blues, eating disorders or marriage counseling for fear that there will be an impact on their right to self-defense. I have dispersed this misconception and assured them that with no threat to themselves or others, outpatient counseling would not be an issue. However, under this bill, I am certain that more women will avoid seeking basic mental health over the concern they will be disarmed unfairly. Women gun owners in our state must feel as comfortable seeking help and have equal access as their non-gun owning counterparts. In fact, I would implore our legislature to ensure it to be so. HB 6355 is counter effective in accomplishing this.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Holly Sullivan

President
Connecticut Citizens Defense League
Southbury, Connecticut